



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

TODD P. GRAVES

Contact Don Ledford, Public Affairs • (816) 426-4220 • 400 East Ninth Street, Room 5510 • Kansas City, MO 64106

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OPERATION ICY HOT
41 DEFENDANTS INDICTED IN METH CONSPIRACY

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced today that 41 defendants have been indicted in a large-scale conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine. The arrest and indictment resulted from a multi-agency investigation, Operation Icy Hot.

Those defendants were charged in a two-count indictment returned under seal by a federal grand jury in Kansas City on Aug. 12, 2004. That indictment was unsealed and made public today upon the arrest and initial court appearance of 11 of those defendants.

Charged in the indictment are:

* **Alberto “Chikis” Balderrama-Sanchez**, 25, **Manuel S. Funes-Vargas**, 37, **Enrique Cazarez, Jr.**, 24, **Humberto Reves**, 34, **Guillermo Rivera-Corral**, 57, and **Angel Garcia-Rodriguez**, 32, all Mexican citizens residing in Kansas City, Mo.;

* **Hector B. Almeda**, 24, **Ramon Leopoldo Morales**, 45, **Rebecca Alexander**, 35, **Christopher M. Graham**, 28, **Lewis G. Kilgore, Jr.**, 28, **Samuel R. Contraras**, 25, **Peyton S. Leach**, 27, **Thomas E. Wasmere, IV**, 35, **Janetta R. Howell**, 35, **Ronald P. Murray**, 46, **John B. Wolf**, 34, **Michael D. Ryan**, 30, and **Jesus M. Hernandez-Delgado**, 25, all of Kansas City, Mo.;

* **Edgar Sanchez**, unknown age, and **Esmeralda I. Mendoza-Mendoza**, 30, both Mexican citizens residing in Independence, Mo.;

* **Herbert L. Conroy, Jr.**, 28, **Michael B. Pedrino**, 26, **Lucas D. Wilson**, 22, **James M. Winkler**, 29, **Cledis R. Roberts, Jr.**, 26, **Kelly E. Bunce**, 24, **Kimberly D. Vickers**, 28, and **Leonira A. Rodriguez**, 29, all of Independence, Mo.;

* **Jose D. Andujo-Hernandez**, 32, **Gilberto Gonzalez-Coronado**, 44, **John Doe a/k/a “Bam Bam,”** unknown age, all Mexican citizens residing in Mexico;

* **Gloria Garcia**, 31, of El Paso, Texas;

* **Armando Hernandez**, 36, a citizen of Mexico residing in Kansas City, Kan.;

* **David J. Perez**, 33, of Kansas City, Kan.;
* **Christopher R. Mays**, 31, of Warrensburg, Mo.;
* **Eric J. Banks**, 31, **Bradley E. Jenkins**, 20, **Ryan T. Poston**, 24, and **Cleothpus J. Harris**, 39, all of Grandview, Mo.;
* **Rebecca L. Martin**, 23, of Raytown, Mo.

Count One of the federal indictment alleges that all of the co-defendants participated in a conspiracy to distribute 50 grams or more of methamphetamine from Jan. 1, 2002, to July 12, 2004. A notice of special findings alleges that at least 1.5 kilograms of methamphetamine was involved, and that a dangerous weapon (including a firearm) was in the possession of one or more co-defendants.

Count Two of the federal indictment is a forfeiture count, which would require all of the co-defendants to forfeit to the United States any property derived from the proceeds of the violation alleged in Count One and all property used in the commission of the alleged offense, including \$12,850 seized at the time of the arrest of **Balderrama** and **Morales** on July 12, 2004, at a residence in Independence.

According to an affidavit filed in support of the original criminal complaint that was filed on July 13, 2004, law enforcement officers executing a search warrant at the time of the arrests also discovered approximately seven pounds of methamphetamine, six firearms (including an assault rifle) and a piece of gold-colored jewelry with the name "Chikis" spelled out in clear gemstones at a residence in Independence occupied by **Sanchez** and **Mendoza-Mendoza**.

Law enforcement officers later seized approximately 1 ½ pounds of methamphetamine at **Balderrama's** residence.

The notice of special findings alleges that **Balderrama-Sanchez** was an organizer and leader of an extensive criminal activity. **Andujo-Hernandez**, **Funes-Vargas**, **Cazarez** and **Reves** were allegedly managers or supervisors in the conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine.

Graves cautioned that the charges contained in the indictment are simply accusations, and not evidence of guilt. Evidence supporting the charges must be presented to a federal trial jury, whose duty is to determine guilt or innocence.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael S. Oliver. It was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Kansas City Metropolitan Drug Task Force, the Jackson County Drug Task Force, the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department, and the Independence, Mo., Police Department.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow